

A STANZA OF DELIVERANCE

NO. 2241

A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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“He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”
Psalm 105:37

THIS verse has been making music in my heart for several days, and at times, it has even claimed utterance from my tongue. I have caught myself singing a solo, with myself as the only hearer, and this has been the theme, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.” I love texts which sing to me and make me join in their tunes. If this verse should get into your hearts, and set you singing in a similar way, you will be entertaining a very pleasant visitor, and it will brighten a dark day for you.

Egypt may very fairly represent those states of sorrow and sadness, depression and oppression, into which God's people come far too frequently. Specially is the house of bondage a true picture of our condition when we are convinced of sin, but are ignorant of the way to escape from its guilt and power. Then sin, which was once our Goshen of pleasure, becomes our iron furnace of fear. Though we yield to sin when under conviction, yet we are no longer its willing subjects, we feel that we are slaves and we sigh by reason of sore bondage. Glory be to God, He has now brought us out from that state of slavery, and we can sing of freedom given by His own right hand!

Since then we have been permitted, in the order of God's providence, to live among evil persons who have had power over us, and have used it maliciously. They have hated our God, and therefore, they have hated us, and shown their dislike of us in many harsh and exacting ways. We find no rest with them, but our soul is among lions. They seem as though they would devour us, or else frighten us from following the road to heaven.

Full often has our gracious God delivered His persecuted people from such a sorrowful condition, and brought them into a large room, wherein He has made them happy with Christian fellowship, and enabled them to go about holy work without let or hindrance. At such times, when God's people have come out from under the yoke of their oppressors, the Lord has “brought them forth also with silver and gold, and there has not been one feeble person among their tribes.”

It is also possible to go down into Egypt by reason of our own depression of spirit, inward conflict, and despondency. If you are like the preacher, you are by no means a stranger to inward sinking. Though you do not give up your faith, but are still, like father Jacob, keeping your hold while the sinew is shrinking, yet you are “sore broken in the place of dragons.” You feel that you are like that bush in the desert which burned with fire, and only through a miracle, was not consumed.

When under temptations of the flesh and memories of old sins, Satan himself comes in with his fiery darts, and you have a hard time of it. He will insinuate dark and dreadful thoughts, and you will be haunted by them, day after day, till you feel like the poor Israelites under the lash of the Egyptian taskmaster. Your covenant with God will bring you out of that state of anguish and distress, and when He does so, you will sing, “He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

God forbid we should repeat that senseless and wicked trust in man, which once made us do down into Egypt for help! We will not go there for pleasure, what have we to do with drinking the waters of

the muddy river? We drink of a better river than the Nile, even of the river of the water of life. But we shall go to the region of weakness and pain to die.

Unless the Lord should suddenly come in His glory, we shall close our eyes in death as Jacob and Joseph did. Then when we go into the tomb, which will be a kind of Egypt for our body, we shall only tarry there for a season. We shall slumber for a while, each one in his bed of dust, but the trumpet of the archangel shall awaken us, and our bodies shall rise again.

We shall not however, come from the grave so poor and feeble as we went in. No, we shall be great gainers by our sojourn in the dark abode. Those who see the saints in the day of resurrection, ascending to their thrones from the Egypt of death, may fitly say, "He brought them forth also with silver and gold: and there was not one feeble person among their tribes."

I am going to try to handle my very delightful subject in the following way—first, *the deliverances of God's people are always wrought by divine power*. Lay the stress on the first word, "HE brought them forth." Secondly, *their deliverances are attended with enrichment*. "He brought them forth also with silver and gold." And thirdly, *their deliverances are accompanied by a remarkable degree of strength*. "There was not one feeble person among their tribes." May the Holy Spirit make rare music for you upon this harp of three strings!

I. First then, when we are led out of the Egypt of our sorrow, OUR DELIVERANCE IS BY DIVINE POWER.

When Israel came out of Egypt, it was JEHOVAH who brought forth her armies. When any man is saved from spiritual bondage, *it is the Lord Jesus who looseth the captive*. Some little time ago I delivered an address at the Mildmay Park Conference upon "Following Jesus in the dark," and the Lord was pleased to bless that word to a great many who were then under a cloud. For this cause I greatly rejoice, but from this happy result I have also had to suffer many things in the following way, it seems as if persons everywhere, having read that address, must write to me an account of their trouble, despondency, and darkness of the soul. Having written the doleful narrative, they very naturally ask me endless questions by way of trying to find light for themselves out of my experience and knowledge.

I have been delighted to answer those questions as far as I can, but there is a limit to human power. I have lately been like a doctor who has suddenly had a new practice handed over to him, when he was already as busy as ever he could be, both night and day. He finds his door besieged by patients who cannot be dismissed with just a word of hope and a dose of medicine, but require a long time in which to tell their griefs and to receive their comfort.

Spiritually, my night bell is always going, and when I visit a sick soul, it requires long and weary nursing. I know therefore from that, as well as from my own experience, that if ever a man is delivered from spiritual bondage of heart, it is not by any easy work, or by a hasty word. Nay, all the power of sympathy and experience will fail with some souls. God alone can take away the iron when it enters into the soul. It is of small use for those afflicted in mind to write to me, or to others, if their distress is spiritual, for God only can deliver them. If they are in the dark, we can strike a match as well as anyone else, but since they need the shining of the sun, that remains with the Lord, who alone creates the light.

Oh, that the Sun of righteousness would rise with healing beneath His wings on every soul that now sits in the midnight of despair! Deliverance from a cruel captivity, like that of Israel in Egypt, must be wrought by the high hand and the outstretched arm of JEHOVAH alone. When such a liberation is performed, then do we rapturously sing, "HE brought them forth."

But this does not exclude the use of means. The Lord used Moses and Aaron, and Moses used his rod and his tongue. Truly JEHOVAH brought forth Israel, and neither Moses nor Aaron nor the rod in Moses' hand, but yet the Lord's instruments were employed in the service. If the Lord delivers you, my dear afflicted friends, the work will not be done by the preacher, not by a consoling book, nor by any other means so as to prevent its being the Lord alone.

The use of instrumentality does not hide divine power, but even makes it more apparent. The man Moses was not only very meek, but he was also so slow in speech that he needed Aaron's help, yet the

Lord used him. Aaron was even inferior to Moses, but the Lord used him! As for the rod, it was probably nothing more than a hazel stick, which had been used by Moses in walking and in keeping sheep, but it pleased the Lord to make of that rod a very remarkable use, so that no scepter of kings was ever so greatly honored. The Lord took care to employ means which could not pretend to share the honor with Himself. Notwithstanding Moses, Aaron, and the rod, "HE brought them forth," and HE alone.

This work of the Lord *does not exclude the action of the will*. The people of Israel came forth freely from the country which had become the house of bondage. "He brought forth His people with joy, and His chosen with gladness." They set out exultingly, glad to escape from the intolerable oppression of Pharaoh, who was to them a tyrant indeed. God does not violate the human will when He saves men, they are not converted against their will, but their will itself is converted. The Lord has a way of entering the heart, not with a crowbar like a burglar, but with a master key, which He gently inserts in the lock and the bolt flies back, the door opens and He enters.

The Lord brought Israel forth, but they had cried unto the Lord by reason of their sore bondage, and they did not receive the blessing without desiring it, yea, and sighing for it, and when it came, they joyfully accepted it and willingly trusted themselves with him whom the Lord had made to be their mediator and leader, even Moses. They did not share the honor of their deliverance with God, but still they gave their hearty assent and consent to His salvation. Willingly as they were to move, it was still true, "HE brought them forth."

Brethren, he must have brought them forth, for *they could never have come forth by themselves*. If you have read enough of Egyptian history to understand the position and power of the reigning Pharaoh, you will know how impossible it was for a mob of slaves, like the Israelites, to make headway against the imperious monarch and his absolute power. If they had clamored and rebelled, the only possible result would have been the slaughter of many, and the still further enslavement of the rest.

There was no hope for the most distinguished Israelite against the tyranny of the Pharaoh, he would simply cry, "Get you unto your burdens," and they could do no less. Pharaoh crushed even his own Egyptians, much more the strangers. You cannot look upon the pyramids and other vast buildings along the Nile, and remember that all these were built with unpaid labor, with the whip continually at the workman's back, without feeling that a pastoral, unarmed race, long held in servitude, could ever have obtained deliverance from the power of Pharaohs, if the omnipotent JEHOVAH had not espoused their cause. "HE brought them forth."

Beloved, *we* can never escape from the bondage of sin by our own power. Our past guilt and the condemnation consequent thereon, have locked us up in a dungeon, whose bars we can never break. The prince of darkness also has such power over our evil natures that we cannot overcome him, or escape from under his dominion of ourselves. If we are ever set free from sin and Satan, it will be eternally and infinitely true that the Lord brought us forth out of the house of bondage. "Salvation is of the LORD."

Moreover, *the spirit of the people was too crushed to have dared to come forth*, even if they could have achieved liberty by a brave revolt. Four hundred years of slavery had ground the very spirit out of the men of Israel. They toiled, they toiled, they toiled, and when Moses came and talked to them about freedom, at first they listened and they hoped, but in a few hours they began to murmur and to complain of Moses and to cry, "Leave us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians."

That abject condition was ours before conversion, we were not easily aroused to seek redemption. I remember hearing the Gospel and getting a little comfort from it, and almost immediately falling back into my former hopelessness, and I said in my soul, "I may as well enjoy the pleasures of sin while I can, for I am doomed to perish for my iniquities." The slavery of sin takes away manliness and courage from the spirit, and when bright hope smiles upon us, we answer her with the sullen silence of despair.

Was it not so with you, my brethren, in those gloomy days? Therefore it must be true, that if the prisoners of sin have come forth, the Lord Himself brought them forth. They had not the spirit of men who could dare to carve out their freedom, they were too enfeebled by their own servile spirit. There

may be some before me at this moment, before whom God has set an open door, and yet they dare not go through it. Christ is put before you, you may have Him for your trusting, you may have Him at once, but you dare not take Him. You are commanded to believe, but you dare not believe what you know to be true. You hear us sing the hymn—

*“Only trust Him, only trust Him,
Only trust Him now;”*

but you dare not trust the Lord Jesus, though this is your only hope of obtaining salvation. Your sin has left you paralyzed with despair. O God, bring forth these prisoners, even now! Though they lie in the inner prison, with their feet fast in the stocks, may it be said on earth and sung in heaven concerning them, “HE brought them forth!”

Yet the Lord did bring them forth. Not in part but as a whole, He redeemed His people. Every one of them was set free. Not only all the human beings, but all their cattle came forth, according to the Word of the Lord, “Not a hoof shall be left behind.” Christ Jesus, in redeeming His people, will have all or none. All that the Father gave Him shall come to Him, nor shall the power of sin, and death, and hell, be able to hold in captivity one whom Jesus has effectually redeemed, nor one whom His Father chose.

All the covenanted ones shall be His in the day when He makes up His jewels. He has paid too much for them to lose one of them. In the loss of one of them too much would be involved, His Word, His covenant, His power, His faithfulness, His honor, would all suffer should one of His little ones perish. Therefore He makes their deliverance effectual, and in very deed He brings them forth.

This deliverance came when the lamb was slain. Pharaoh held Israel captive during all the plagues, but he could not go beyond a certain point. On that same night when they saw the lamb slain, and roasted with fire while they sat in their houses protected by the blood sprinkled upon the lintel and the two side posts of their doors, that selfsame night they left Egypt. They went forth under that seal of redemption, the blood-red mark of substitutionary sacrifice.

My dear hearer, perhaps this very night you will also go forth into glorious liberty. I know you will, if you will by faith look to Jesus as the Lamb slain for you. Will you now accept Him as your own, and trust Him to be your redemption? Behold then, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world! Take His precious blood and let it be sprinkled on your door, yea, and upon your own self, that the angel of vengeance may pass you by. Can you come and feed on Christ at once, as the Lamb of God’s passover? Do you say that this would be a bold and venturesome faith? Yet be so bold and venturesome. Blessed to the name of the Lord, none were ever rejected who dared to trust Jesus! We will sing about you and others if you have faith in the great sacrifice, and this will be our song, “HE brought them forth.”

Israel cannot remain under slavery to Egypt when once the redemption price has been accepted and the blood has been sprinkled. None know freedom from sin but those who trust the atoning blood. God forbid that I should point you to any way of hope but this one path, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

I have perhaps said enough on this point, but assuredly I have fallen short unless I have made you know each one that deliverance from sin is solely by the power of God. “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.” Unless a supernatural power is put forth in it, any form of deliverance from sin is worth nothing. If you have been born again from below, you will go below, you must be born again from above if you are to go above. There is no true liberty but that wherewith Christ makes you free. “If the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

Do you know what it is, dear friends, to be brought out of prison by a miracle of grace, by a revelation of the Holy Ghost, by the blood of Jesus shed for many? If so, you will join with all the saints in singing, “As for his people, HE brought them forth.”

II. But now we reach a very pleasing part of our theme. We have now to note that OUR DELIVERANCE WAS ATTENDED WITH ENRICHMENT, “He brought them forth also *with silver and gold.*”

“Oh!” says one, “I remember all that about that transaction. That is the silver and gold which they borrowed from the Egyptians with no intent of repaying the loan. I have always thought that was a thievish trick.” It was a very unfortunate mistake of our translators when they rendered the original by the word “borrowed,” for it is not the correct word. Our Revised Version has it more accurately, “And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they *asked* of the Egyptians jewels of silver and jewels of gold, and raiment: and the LORD gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have what they asked.”

Even if you were forced to read the word “borrowed,” it might mean nothing amiss, for all borrowing and nonpayment is not thieving. “Oh!” say you, “that is a new doctrine.” Let me state the case. If I borrow upon the security of my property, and leave the property in the hand of the lender, he will not complain if the security is worth more than the loan. These Israelites had lands and houses and other property which they could not carry with them, and now that their sudden removal involved a forced sale, they could say to those who lived near them, “Here is our land, what will you give us for it?”

The people took the immovable property of the Israelites, and if they granted them a loan upon it, they were well aware of what they were doing, and were not defrauded. But we have no need thus to defend Israel. The Great Proprietor of all things bade them ask, and influenced the minds of their neighbors to give. It was just that these poor people, who had been working without fee or reward, and had thereby screened the native Egyptians from much forced labor, should have some remuneration. The people of Egypt were, in part, afraid of them and of their God, and were also in measure, sympathetic with them under their cruel oppression, and so they forced presents upon the Israelites, hoping to get their blessing before they departed, to save them from further plagues which might visit the land.

The natives as good as said, “Take whatever you please from us, for we have treated you ill. Only leave us alone, for plagues and deaths fall upon us thick and fast so long as Pharaoh detains you here.” However, this is not my point. I am dealing with more spiritual things. When God brings His people out of bondage, they come out enriched in the best and most emphatic sense.

This seemed very unlikely. It looks to the afflicted as if they could not be profited by trials such as theirs. If they can only escape by the skin of their teeth, they will feel perfectly satisfied. Depressed spirits cannot lift their thought so high as to think of the gold of increased joy, or the silver of enlarged knowledge, or the jewels of holy graces. “I am,” said one, “quite prepared to sit down behind the door in heaven, or at the feet of the least of the saints, so long as I may but get there.”

In some respects this is a very proper feeling. But this is not God’s way of acting, He did not lead forth His people in a poverty-stricken way, but “He brought them forth also with silver and gold.” Your Deliverer means to enrich you spiritually when He sets you free from your sorrow and trouble.

It was very far from being the design of their enemies to enrich Israel, Pharaoh had intended to work them down to the last ounce of strength, and keep them in abject poverty, in fact, one chief object of his oppression was to kill down the race, lest they should too greatly multiply. But the Lord turned the curse into a blessing, “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew,” and the harder they worked, the healthier they became, so that “there was not one feeble person among their tribes.”

This was not according to their enemies’ will, but the will of the Lord is paramount. Even so it is not the devil’s will to drive a man nearer to Christ, but yet his temptations and assaults are often used of the Lord to make the best and most experienced Christians. Satan is the scullion in God’s kitchen, and he has to scour the vessels of mercy. Trials and afflictions, which threaten to kill us, are made to sanctify us, and sanctification is the best form of enrichment. How much we owe to sorrow and sickness, crosses and losses! Our bondage ends in our coming forth with much that is better than silver and gold.

Thus do we come forth from conviction of sin. “Now tell me,” says one, “what does a man gain by being in a desponding, sorrowful condition, convicted of sin, and full of fears?” By the work of the Holy Spirit he will gain much. He will obtain a clearer knowledge of the evil of sin. This is a rare thing nowadays, when we have so many believers who were never penitent.

It is a great thing for a child, who has a habit of stealing apples, to get himself well filled with the sourest of them, and feel the gripes strong within him. He will never touch such fruit any more. It is a great thing for a man in his early days, to know what a sour apple sin is, and to feel heartache and soul-anguish because of the exceeding bitterness of his evil ways. It is a lasting lesson.

As the burnt child dreads the fire, and the scalded dog is afraid even of cold water, so the discipline of conscience, through divine grace, breeds a holy caution and even a hatred of sin. We have few Puritans because we have few penitents. An awful sense of guilt, and an overwhelming conviction of sin, may be the foundation stone of a gloriously holy character.

The tried and tempted man will also see clearly that salvation is all of grace. He feels that if he ever rises from his despondency, he can never dare to take an atom of the honor of deliverance to himself, it must be of free grace only. He can do nothing, and he knows it. When a child of God can spell GRACE, and can pronounce it clearly, as with the true Jerusalem accent, he has gained a great deal of spiritual silver and gold.

I have heard a brother stutter over that word, “free grace,” till it came out very like “free will.” As for myself, that Shibboleth I pronounce without faltering, for my free will is that which I daily try to master and I bring it into complete subjection to the will of God, and to free grace I owe everything.

Blessed is that man who, by his experience, has been made to know that free grace is the source of every blessing and privilege, and that salvation is all of grace from first to last. By a knowledge of the great Gospel principle of grace, men are brought forth also with silver and gold.

Such persons gain by their soul trouble a fund of healthy experience. They have been in prison, and have had their feet made fast in the stocks. “Well,” says one, “I do not want to feel that sort of treatment.” No, but suppose you had felt it, the next time you met with a brother who was locked up in the castle of the Giant Despair, you would know how to sympathize with him and help him.

You who never felt a finger ache cannot show much sympathy with broken bones. I take it to be a great gain to a man to be able to exhibit sympathy towards sufferers of all kinds, and especially towards spiritual sufferers. If you can enter into the condition of a bondsman because you have yourself been a bondsman in Egypt, and God has brought you out, then you will be qualified to comfort those who mourn.

Thus, you see, in various ways, the Lord’s people are enriched by the sorrows from which they are delivered by God. “HE brought them forth also with silver and gold.” Persons who come to Christ suddenly, and find peace immediately, have much to be grateful for, and they may be helpful to others of a similar character, but those who suffer long law-work, and have deep searching of the heart before they can enter into rest, have equal reasons for thankfulness, since they obtain a fitness for dealing with special cases of distressed consciences. Where this is the result of severe trial, we may well say that the Lord has brought them forth with silver and gold.

Thus do saints come out of persecution. The church is refined by the fires of martyrdom. The heap on the Lord’s threshing floor is more largely made up of real wheat after the winnowing fan has been used upon it. Individual piety is also deeper, stronger, nobler in persecuting times than in other seasons. Eminent saints have usually been produced where the environment was opposed to truth and godliness. To this day the bride of Christ has for her fairest jewels the rubies of martyrdom. Out of each period of fierce persecution the Lord has brought forth His people the better for the fires. “HE brought them forth also with silver and gold.”

Thus do believers come out of daily afflictions. They become wealthier in grace and richer in experience. Have you noticed how real those men are who have known sharp trials? If you want an idle evening of chit-chat, go and talk to the gentleman with a regular income, constant good health, and

admiring friends, he will amuse your leisure hour. But if you are sad and sorrowful, and need conversation that will bless you, steer clear of that man's door. Look into the faces of the frivolous, and turn away as a thirsty man from an empty cistern. He that has never had his own cheek wet with tears, cannot wipe my tears away.

Where will you go in the day of trouble? Why, to that good old man whose sober experience has not robbed him of cheerfulness, though it has killed his sinful folly. He has been poor, and he knows the inconvenience of straightened means, he has been ill, and can bear with the infirmities of the sick, he has buried his dearest ones, and has compassion for the bereaved. When he begins to talk, the tone of his voice is that of a sympathetic friend. His lips drop fatness of comfort. What a gain is his spiritual acquaintance!

A man of God, whose life has been full of mental exercises and spiritual conflict, as well as outward tribulation, becomes through divine grace, a man of a large wealth of knowledge, prudence, faith, foresight, and wisdom, and he is to the inexperienced like some great proprietor, by whom multitudes of the poorer class are fed and guided, housed and set to work. Those who have been much tried are in the peerage of the church.

A man who has been in the furnace, and has come out of it, is a marked man. I think I should know Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego even now if I were to meet them. Though the smell of the fire had not passed upon them, I feel sure that it left a glow upon their countenances, and a glory upon their persons, which we find nowhere else. They are henceforth called "the three holy children," they were holy before, but now men own it. Do you not think that they were great gainers by the furnace, and is it not true of all the godly whose lives have been made memorable by special tribulation, "HE brought them forth also with silver and gold"?

When you and I reach the shores of heaven, *thus shall we come into glory*. When we come forth out of our graves, it will not be with loss, but with enrichment. We shall leave corruption and the worm behind us, and with them all that earthly grossness which made us groan in these mortal bodies. God will bring us forth also with silver and gold. What golden songs we will sing! What silver notes of gratitude will we pour forth! What jewels of communion with one another, and of communion with our Lord, will adorn our raiment! If we too, have been men of sorrows and acquainted with grief, how much more fully shall we enter into the joy of our Lord because we entered into His sorrow!

We also have suffered for sin, and have done battle for God and for His truth against the enemy. We also have borne reproach, and become aliens to our mother's children, we too have been bruised in the heel, and yet in death have conquered death, even as He did, only by His grace. Hence the joy of fellowship with Him through eternity. What news we shall have to tell to angels, and principalities, and powers! The gems of our grateful history will be our trials and deliverances. Coming up from death to eternal life, this will be the sum of it, "HE brought them forth also with silver and gold."

Dear friends, I am anxious to pass on to the third point, for time is flying fast, but I cannot neglect the application of what I have said. I beg those of you who are sad and despondent to notice the truths I have advanced. I want you to believe that your present affliction is for your enrichment. You will come out of this Egypt with much profit of grace.

"Let me out," cries one, "only let me out." I pray you, be not impatient. Why rush out naked, when a little patience will be repaid with silver and gold? If I were laboring in Egypt, and I heard that it was time for me to start for the land of Canaan, I should be eager to be gone at once, but if I found that I must be hindered for an hour or two, I should certainly utilize the delay by disposing of my lands, and endeavoring to get together treasures which I could carry with me. The delay would not be lost time.

Therefore, beloved friend, if you cannot at once obtain comfort, make good use of your affliction. Be always more earnest to profit by your trials than to escape from them. Be more earnest after the heavenly silver and gold than about hurrying away from the scene of conflict and temptation.

III. Thirdly, here is a very wonderful thing. OUR DELIVERANCE IS ACCOMPANIED WITH HEALTH AND STRENGTH, "There was not one feeble person among their tribes."

In the thousands of Israel there was not one person who could not march out of the land keeping rank as an efficient soldier. Everyone was fit for the journey through the wilderness. They numbered hard upon two millions, if not more, and it is a very surprising fact that there should not have been one feeble person among their tribes.

Mark the word, not only no one sick, but no one “feeble,” none with the rheumatism or other pains which enfeeble walking, or palsies which prevent bearing burdens. This was nothing less than a sanitary miracle, the like of which was never known in the natural order of things.

This fact is typical of the health and strength of the newly saved. The Lord’s people, at conversion are as a rule, wonderfully strong in their love to Jesus, and their hatred of sin. In most cases our young converts, when they have truly come to Christ, even if they are a little timid, are vigorous, much in prayer, abounding in zeal, and earnest in speaking out the Gospel. Many of them, I believe, would die at the stake readily enough, while they are in their first love. In their earliest days nothing is too hot or too heavy for them, for the sake of Jesus Christ, their Lord.

If I need a bit of work to be done which requires dash and self-sacrifice, give me a set of Israelites who have just come out of Egypt, for there is not one feeble person among their tribes. After they have gone some distance into the wilderness, they are apt to forget the right hand of the Lord, and to get to fretting and worrying. Very soon many of them are sick, through being bitten by fiery serpents or smitten with the plague. They begin grumbling and complaining and run into all sorts of mischief in a short time, but when they first came out, they were so excellent that even the Lord said, “I remember thee, the love of thine espousals.”

I have known some of you, after you have been members of the church for a few months, greatly need a very nice cushion to sit upon, and the cozy corner of the pew, whereas once you could stand in the aisle and not know that you were standing. You have grown wonderfully particular about the singing, and the tunes, and the length of the prayer, and the preacher’s attitude, and especially the respect paid to your own dear self. Only very choice service suits you, it would almost insult you if you were put to common work. You were not like that when you were first converted.

Do you recollect how the crowd pressed upon you, and yet you were so absorbed in listening to the preacher’s voice that you never minded it? What walks you took then to reach the service! I notice, my friend, that when your grace grew short, the miles grew long. When you first joined the church, I said to you, “I fear you live too far off to attend regularly.” But you took me up very quickly and said, “Oh, that is nothing, sir! If I can only get spiritual food, distance is no object.”

When you get cold in heart, you find it inconvenient to come so far, and you go to a fashionable place of worship where your musical tastes can be gratified. Yes, when divine grace declines, fancy rules the mind, and love of ease controls the body, and the soul loses appetite, and grows greedy for empty phrases, and weary of the Word of God. May the Lord grant you grace to be among those of whom it is said, “There was not one feeble person among their tribes”!

Full often it is so with the persecuted. I do not wish that any of you should experience persecution, but I am persuaded it would do some of you good to have a touch of it. A man who has fulfilled an apprenticeship to this hard master, is likely to be a man indeed. If he has endured hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ, he will be fit to become an officer in the army and an instructor of recruits. If I could, by the lifting of my finger, screen every believer from persecution at home and in the workshop, I should hesitate long before I did it, since I am persuaded that the church is never more pure, more holy, more prayerful, or more powerful than when the world is raging against her.

The dogs keep off the wolves. The hypocrite declines to enter the church where he will gain nothing but reproach or worse. When there were stakes at Smithfield, Protestantism meant heroism. When the Lord’s covenanting people were meeting among the hills and mosses of Scotland, there were no “moderates” or “modern-thought” men among them. They knew and loved the truth for which they fought, and that truth made them strong.

It would be a glorious day if it were so with all God's people, that there were none feeble. We should, as a church, labor to reach this high standard. We would have the weakest to be as David, and David as the angel of the Lord. We would have our babes become young men, and our young men fathers in Christ. Do we reach this standard at the Tabernacle? Alas! we do not by a very long way. There are numbers of very feeble persons among our tribes. I will not say a word against them, dear hearts! for I trust they are sincere, though feeble. How greatly I wish that they were more concerned about their own feebleness, for it is a real loss to the cause we have at heart!

The feeble hinder the strong. We want all the strength of the host for storming the enemies' ramparts, whereas some of us have to stop behind to nurse the infirm. We should not mind this so much, only these are the same poor creatures that were nursed twenty years ago, and they have made no advance. May the Lord strengthen us all till we shall all be made fit for the service of Jesus!

Oh, when we meet in the home country, when we once get to glory, what a delight it will be that *there will be no sin or weakness there!* When the Lord has once brought us forth from the world and all its troubles, then all sinful weakness shall be unknown. We shall all be raised in power, and shall be as angels of God.

Are you going there, dear friends? "Yes," says one, "I hope that I am going there, but I am a feeble person." Thank God that you are on the right road, even if you limp. It is better to enter into life halt, and maimed, and feeble, than to run and leap in the way of death. If I can give a lift to anyone who is feeble, I am sure I will. At the same time, I would urge you to cry to the Lord to make you strong, and bid you trust in Christ for the power which He alone can give, of faith to overcome doubts and fears.

If any of you have not believed unto eternal life, now put your trust in the Lord Jesus. They serve a good Master who trust alone in Jesus, and take up their cross and follow Him. In Him is life for the perishing, joy for the sorrowing, rest for the weary, and liberty for the captives.

Are you shut up, like a prisoner in a castle? Do but trust in Jesus and He will batter the dungeon door and bring you out. Yea, and He will not give you a penniless liberty, a liberty to perish of want. No, it shall be said of you, and of others like you, "HE brought them forth also with silver and gold." Amen, so be it! So be it, even at this moment, good Lord!

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 105

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—30, 116, 126

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.